

**VETERANS & SENIORS COMMITTEE**  
**of the**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**  
  
**Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Veterans & Seniors Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislative Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on Tuesday, **September 21, 2004.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Daniel P. Losquadro, Chairman  
Lynne C. Nowick, Vice•Chairperson  
Leg. Jon Cooper  
Leg. William J. Lindsay  
Leg. Cameron Alden  
Leg. Elie Mystal

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Legislator David Bishop, Fourteenth District  
Mea Knapp, Counsel to the Legislature  
Ilona Julius, Deputy Clerk  
Debra Weiner, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program  
Holly Rhodes•Teague, Office of the Aging  
Nanette Essel, PO Aide  
Fran Siems, PO Aide  
Kevin LaValle, Aide to Leg. Losquadro

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Kraus • Court Stenographer

**(THE MEETING WAS CONVENED AT 12:53 PM)**

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

I call the Committee of Veterans and Seniors to order. We'll begin with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Nowick.

**(SALUTATION)**

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

And I know we're pressed for time, but I would ask each of you to just observe a moment of silence for our men and women overseas and here at home protecting us in the fight against our enemies both foreign and domestic.

**(MOMENT OF SILENCE)**

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you.

I know we do have a couple of presentations today. I apologize for the delay. The Ways and Means Committee ran exceptionally long. No criticism of Legislator Alden. He tried to move it along as quickly as possible. Due to the delay, I know we had promised the presenters that we would move to them as quickly as possible; but due to the delay, I would just ask the members who have shown for the Senior Citizens Advisory Board to just please come forward. If any of the members of the Committee have any questions •• to my understanding we only have two of the ten •• are there eight here? I see eight members who are coming forward. Only two were unable to make it. I appreciate all of you coming. I know there are a number of those that have served. Many of these terms have obviously expired. This is very important for this advisory board to be reconstituted at this time. I appreciate all of your willingness to serve on this. This is very important. And I would open this to any questions from Legislators at this time. Legislator Lindsay.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Yeah, I would like if you folks would come down, instead of spending your time waiting for us, if you could identify yourself and maybe just tell us a little bit about yourself, I'd appreciate it.

**MS. BLANCHE MULHOLLAND:**

My name is Blanche Mulholland. I'm a senior citizen; have been for sometime. I am currently President of the Suffolk County Chapter of the Green Panthers. And I consider myself an authority on seniors, their problems. And I feel that my goals are the same as the board's; to

help solve the problems pertaining to the seniors.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. Ma'am.

**MS. COVERDALE:**

My name is Chestene Coverdale. I'm the Director of the Greater Sayville Food Pantry.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Turn on the switch on the microphone; the one closest to you up top.

**MS. COVERDALE:**

I'll start again. My name is Chestene Coverdale. I really don't need a mike. Oh, you can't hear?

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

It has to be on the record.

**MS. COVERDALE:**

My name is Chestene Coverdale. I'm the Director of the Food Pantry in Sayville; the Greater Sayville Food Pantry. I'm also an adjunct professor at Dowling College. At the food pantry we deal quite a bit with seniors and with veterans. And I'm happy to be a member of the board and I hope I can be of some assistance.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. Ma'am.

**MS. EGGLETON:**

My name is Elizabeth Eggleton. I'm a reappointment to the Board having served since 1996. I'm a teacher of gerontology. I'm Associate Director of the Center on Aging at LIU. I'm an adjunct professor there as well. I also am Managing Director of Surrogate For Family.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Turn the mike on.

**MS. EGGLETON:**

Thanks. Should I start over?

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

She got it.

**MS. EGGLETON:**

Okay. Let's see. I also do guardianship work with New York State Supreme Court as court evaluator and as trustee and guardian. And I find that I'm able to gain a lot from the board members and serving the County because I have a really macro view of gerontology and aging problems. And I also work with seniors and find that I also can do the micro view, what the real nitty•gritty problems are. So, I hope to continue to serve. I'm very, very happy serving Suffolk County and the seniors in Suffolk County.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you.

**MS. STEVENS:**

My name is Arlene Stevens. I'm also a reappointment. I've been on the board •• this will be my fourth year. I am also on the Senior Advisory Council of Brookhaven. And it's my desire to serve the seniors of our community. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. Please pass the microphone. Just make sure the top switch is on.

**MR. STERN:**

Good afternoon.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you.

**MR. STERN:**

My name is Steven Stern. I'm a partner in the law firm of Davidow, Davidow, Siegel and Stern located in Islandia and in Mattituck. Our entire practice is geared towards representing the elderly and the disabled of Long Island. So, like many of my colleagues, I'm on the front lines of the issues that face seniors and their families everyday from long•term care financing to access to the courts to prevention of elder abuse. And as I mentioned to a few people, I'm a

first time appointee. I'm very excited to be here.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. Very worthwhile work.

**MR. EDWARDS:**

My name is Tim Edwards, Vice President and Executive Editor of Fifty Plus Senior News, which is a monthly newspaper serving seniors. I've been on the Advisory Board for the past year. And like our newspaper and the Advisory Board, we cover a wide variety of issues that we've come across over the 25 years that the paper's been in existence. So, you know, I look to continue doing that as well.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. Microphone at the podium is fine, yes.

**MS. GALLOGLY:**

I'm Carolyn Gallogly. I'm also up for reappointment. I think I'm a fossil because I can't remember how many times I've been reappointed to the Board. But I've been here a long time. And I have to say that it was very recently within the last couple of years when we first started meeting and sending representatives on a regular basis to this meeting with Legislator Lindsay that we developed, I think, a better relationship with your Committee. And I know, I've had the pleasure now of meeting you. And I want that to keep going. I'm the Chairperson of the Committee or hope to continue to be the Chairperson of the Committee. And that's something that we believe in. We don't want to see our efforts just within our group, you know. We draw from it a lot; but we want to make sure that what we're learning gets back to you and in turn to the future of programs and services for seniors in Suffolk County.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Fantastic. I think we all look forward to working with you.

**MR. SIEGMANN:**

My name is Ed Siegman. And I'm President of the Suffolk County East End Senior Citizen Council. I also write a volunteer column in Suffolk Life called The Upper Half. And I got interested in working for seniors after I moved out here because I saw so many of them being forced to move off the Island because they couldn't afford to stay here anymore. Decided

something had to be done on it. And I'm working on the things that possibly can keep those people here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Yes, Legislator Lindsay.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

I would just like to thank all of you who have served in the past and are coming forward now to serve in the future for your time and efforts. All of us really appreciate the time that you give to this. And, Carolyn, I hope you bug us to come back with your ideas and your thoughts from the committee. Our seniors in Suffolk County make up a very, very important part of our population. And we want to hear from you. We want to hear what we can do to help your plight a little bit easier.

**MS. GALLOGLY:**

I also want to thank the ex officio members of our committee because we do have members from several of the different departments who have been so helpful to us. And in turn, again, that informs the kind of thing that we can share with you. Probably the first issue we're going to be hopefully sharing with you at some future date will relate to transportation. I'm sure a very, you know, popular topic in Suffolk County. But it is one that we are dedicated to because we see the problem just come up over and over and over again. And maybe, you know, we can get somewhere this year with some kind of policy. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

We look forward to it. And, again, I would like to echo Legislator Lindsay's thanks to those of you who have served in the past, to first time members of the board. We look forward to working with you. I for one am very excited to be working with a board that obviously is so committed to be able to volunteer so much of their time to do this. So, we look forward to working with all you and thank you again for your time. If there are no further questions •• Legislator Mystal.

**LEG. MYSTAL:**

This is a question •• this is a question for the Chair. I counted ten appointments. We only have eight?

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Yes. Unfortunately two of the members Helen Brion and Gene Pritz were unable to make it today. I was extremely happy we got eight of the ten to come today. These are, you know, strictly volunteer positions somewhat thankless jobs. The •• their information has been provided if you would like me to forward it to you. But, yeah •• no, we were in contact with them. The eight members today were able for come down. I thank them for taking the time out of their day. Legislator Nowick.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

I just want to also thank you all for your volunteer services. It's very important. It's important to us in the County and certainly all of us who have our parents •• fortunately have our parents still with us. But I just wanted to ask these two gentlemen on the right if have proof of age because •• I thank you all.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Don't worry. I get that all the time.

**MS. MULHOLLAND:**

Mr. Losquadro, if I may add something else.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Yes.

**MS. MULHOLLAND:**

I am speaking for the seniors. As I say, they're my people. It's gratifying to know that we have such a board, such advocates that we can go to. I attend almost every seminar that there is. And I see the input; I see the problems. And unfortunately dealing with the bureaucracy and the society and the stigma that stereotypes our seniors, it's out there. But knowing that these seniors know that there's somebody out there in their corner, and that's why I'm so happy to be part of this; and I can see we're all dedicated to the same goals. So, I thank you

for letting us be here.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

That is why we're here. We are here to be your advocates. You are the voice, so to speak, of the senior community serving on this board. You know, we expect you to bring those problems and concerns that are confronting the senior community to us. And, you know, we, of course, will continue to do our best to cut through that red tape and that bureaucracy to find the types of solutions that we need to solve these problems. Legislator Mystal.

**LEG. MYSTAL:**

I do want to thank you. I'm 58 years old. So, I'm hoping you're advocating for me because I'm banking that corner. I'm banking that corner. You know, I'm going to need your help soon.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

I'm not banking that corner.

**LEG. MYSTAL:**

You're not banking. You're staying. She's staying put. I'm moving on, you know. So, we do appreciate your concern in what you do for all seniors in this County. My district is •• we have a very large number of seniors. We have Dominican Village, which is the senior housing complex, which I attend •• I go there for free lunches. So, I do appreciate your being here and your service.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

I pay for my lunches when I go to senior events.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you for the commentary. Do we have any other comments either •• from members of the board? All right. We will •• we'll just take care of this portion of the agenda quickly while you're here. **Resolution 1854, appointing Chestene Coverdale (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Motion by Legislator Lindsay, second by Legislator Nowick. All those in favor? Opposed? **1854 is approved. (Vote: 6•0)**



**1855, appointing Blanche Mulholland (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6•0)**

**1856, appointing Steven Stern as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board.** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6 • 0)**

**1857, appointing Arlene Stevens (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6•0)**

**1858, appointing Timothy Edwards (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6•0)**

**1859, appointing Helen Brion (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6•0)**

**1860, appointing Elizabeth Eggleton (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6•0)**

**1861, appointing Carolyn Gallogly (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6•0)**

**1862, appointing Gene Pritz (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6•0)**

**1863, appointing Ed Siegmann (as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board)** Same motion, same second, same vote. **(Approved. Vote: 6 • 0)**

All those are approved. Thank you all for your time and coming down today.

**(APPLAUSE)**

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

We will now go back to the presentations that we have scheduled. We have Debra Weiner from

RSVP. Just grab a microphone. Good afternoon.

**MS. WEINER:**

And I need one because my voice is not allowed. Good afternoon, Chairman Losquadro, Legislators Nowick, Alden, Mystal, Lindsay and Cooper. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to present RSVP 101 to you.

Also, I want to thank all of you for the support that this Committee has always given us all the way back 32 years. And any time we've ever needed any help from you, you've always been more than kind to us.

I just want to give you a very quick historical perspective of RSVP because some of you do know about us and I see some new members on this Committee that may not have an idea about RSVP. It's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. It was started under the Older Americans Act and I believe it's the only program under the Older Americans Act to deal with healthy •• to deal with healthy adults over the age of 60. And the program was started to allow the older adults to give back to their communities in the way of service and also to promote mental health. And I believe most of you know the programs that we're contracted under to Suffolk County. That's the Telephone Reassurance, Health Promotion Disease Prevention •• Legislator Bishop, I didn't even see you there. Excuse me. He's my Legislator.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

Your presence compelled me to be here.

**MS. WEINER:**

He's my Legislator. And I always vote for him. So, there we go. But this isn't a political thing. And I won't, I'm sorry. But anyway, as I mentioned, there are four programs that we are work with our subcontractors from the Office of the Aging. One is the Telephone Reassurance Program under title 3B of the federal Older Americans Act. The other one is the Health Promotion Disease Prevention, where we go into senior centers and with trained volunteers, we do exercise programs and arthritis education programs and osteoporosis prevention programs; anything to promote the health of the seniors. And then under the Department of •• well, it used to be Alcohol and Substance Abuse. And I'm not sure what it's called now, but we have a contract to do a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program, talking to seniors about using their medications properly. And finally, we have the Health Insurance Information Program and Fraud and Abuse Program.

So, all of that is county •• partially county•funded. And I imagine you know that. But what you might not know is that we have 1,000 volunteers in Suffolk County working at over 125 different non•profit agencies including schools, hospitals; just name it, even at the County Executive's Office ••

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

I'm sorry. What was that number again?

**MS. WEINER:**

A thousand volunteers serving at about 125 non•profit agencies. And that's what this is all about today. Because the Division of Mental Hygiene made a video for themselves actually to show how volunteers can promote mental health. And it was shown on channel 55 in the month of April. And we have a copy here. And I felt as a committee on aging and veterans and aging and seniors, you really might know •• want to know an indepth study of what RSVP actually does. After this eight minute video, we have a special presentation to make to you. So ••

**(PRESENTATION)**

**MS. WEINER:**

Now, with your indulgence, we'd like to make a presentation to the committee. Is it all right to approach? The volunteers last year served over 140,000 hours at the value of \$16.54 an hour. Their value to Suffolk County came to more than \$2 million and we are presenting this check to the committee of Suffolk County.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

We'll wait and then take a picture. We'll all get together. Thank you. And this is such a wonderful program; to tap into such an amazing resource that we have here in Suffolk County. So often you hear the aging population of Suffolk County described in a negative fashion as you said before. And this really turns the focus in a completely different direction. And utilizing a resource of people who helped build this country to where we are today. People with so much to offer and so much to give back who want to, but don't necessarily have an outlet for that passion and that desire. This •• I really •• I can't say enough good things about this

organization. It's really helping to utilize this resource for Suffolk County. And I know I speak for all of us when I say thank you.

**MS. WEINER:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Did anyone else have any parting comments? Okay. I'll just ask Holly Rhodes•Teague just to come forward for a moment, if you have a brief update for us on any issues before your department.

**MS. RHODES•TEAGUE:**

I just want to ask that you support the advisory board. I know you're all pretty happy with their comments. That would be great; because that's how I find out what's happening in the community is by the advisory board. We have a great relationship. So, you know, I'd like the people that are there to continue and the new people to come on because they all seem to be really good •• good resources for us.

In terms of our office, we've been real busy with •• September, October's like going back to school. Everybody has an affair or an event they'd like our staff to be at. So we got, I think, ten events that we have people out at. So, we're out in the community in a variety of places over the next couple of months. So, you might see our staff at different places. Or if you have something going on that you'd like them at, you can let us know and we'll try to put them wherever it is that you've got something going.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Legislator Alden.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

If it's a free lunch, it looks like Legislator Mystal might •• will want to be there. So ••

**MS. RHODES•TEAGUE:**

All right. I'll put you on the list.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Legislator Lindsay.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Holly, we were running seminars on the federal prescription drug program. Are we still doing that?

**MS. RHODES•TEAGUE:**

We ran a total of 12 altogether. We had one from professionals and then we had ten •• one in each of the towns. Then, we also did one over at Adelante for Spanish speaking seniors. So, altogether we •• I guess we reached about 1,000 people between those 12 meetings. We are still assisting in different things. For example, Southampton's doing something in a couple of weeks we'll have staff at. Nassau County has put together a coalition with grants that they •• they were able to get, that we're now part of a regional coalition with them to provide information on the Medicare. And they're really targeting the low income senior who can benefit by that \$600 credit. So, we're active in that. So, we're still out there in the community. But there are no planned meetings like the ones that we just did. I think the next push will be next year when •• just prior to the 2006 change•over because that's going to be, what I would predict, a terrible nightmare for the seniors, but, you know.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

If I could just make a comment. I know for myself, and I worked with Holly on this, I did a targeted mailing to some of the senior communities in my district, you know, through my pre •paid envelopes that we get through our offices. And I sent out letters encouraging residents in those senior communities to attend those workshops that were held. And, you know, I think that the turnout for the Town of Brookhaven seminar that you did was a little higher than they expected. So it might not be a bad idea to target •• if you have specific senior communities within your districts, it might not be a bad idea to target those next year. Just something to keep in the back of your mind.

**MS. RHODES•TEAGUE:**

Next year, I think, again, I think it will be the big push. You know, at this point my intention is just to continue work with the organizations we've worked with either Empire, Medicare Services, Epic. Right now they still don't know how all this is going to come together; but once they know how the plan's going to come together, then we'll try to do •• it's just •• it's ••

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

So, as soon as we can figure it out, we'll explain it to the seniors.

**MS. RHODES • TEAGUE:**

Yeah. But we can't •• you know, right now nobody knows how it's going •• I mean nobody knows how Epic's going to wrap around, you know •• I mean, I think everybody's hoping there's going to be change as to the federal legislation that they approved because it's so awful. There's nobody's that's happy with it. So, you know, we really can't plan •• excuse me?

**LEG. BISHOP:**

Whether the federal is going to supersede everything.

**MS. RHODES • TEAGUE:**

Well, it's just we're not sure if they're going to continue as is. If it's going to be business as usual on the state level •• we don't know. So, it's really kind of a bureaucratic night mare to have to try to sort out next year. But, you know, we're assuming that once this is sorted out to some extent, we'll be out there trying to get the word out to the seniors. So, you know, that's our next year's big •• big push for us.

**CHAIRMAN LOSQUADRO:**

Thank you. Any further questions? No? Thank you, Holly.

I do apologize. We were supposed to have a presentation from Dennis Long about the Wounded Warrior Program. He had an emergency. He was unable to make it today. I'm looking forward to hearing that presentation from him at a future date. We'll try to reschedule that.

If there's no further business before this committee, we stand adjourned. Thank you for your time. If everyone could please gather out front for a moment, we'll do a photo.

**(MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 1:28 PM)**